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Foreign Policy Machinery Getting Thorough Check To Improve Performance

Jackson Subcommittee in Senate, Which Began Inquiry Last Year, to Recommend 'Sweeping Changes' for Greater National Security—What Will Be Done Depends on Next President.

By RAYMOND P. BRANDT

Chief Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch

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WHILE THE INFLUENTIAL Senate Foreign Relations Committee is guardedly exposing the blunders that gave Russian Premier Khrushchev his excuse for wrecking the summit conference, a smaller Senate group is continuing its long-planned study for guidance of the next President in forming and implementing American foreign policy.

The lesser known group is the five-man subcommittee on national policy machinery of the Government Operations Committee. Its chairman is Democrat Henry M. Jackson of Washington, who said this week that the subcommittee would recommend "sweeping changes" to meet the fundamental problem of Western survival: "How can a free society organize to out-think, out-plan and out-perform totalitarianism—and achieve security in freedom?"

THE FOREIGN Relations Committee's ad hoc inquiry is limited to events leading up to the collapse of the Big Four meeting, including the U-2 overflight of Soviet territory. Timely and exploratory, it is directed at personalities and personal responsibilities rather than policy-making and policy-implementing procedures. The testimony 'compels headlines here and abroad. The disclosures will become issues in the presidential campaign.

The Jackson subcommittee investigation, begun last year, covers the entire range of national security. As its title denotes, it is confined to "machinery," despite the fact that personalities, their capacities and shortcomings, are an integral part of any constructive examination of management of governmental organizations, including the presidential staff. The serious limitation was necessary to get White House participation in the study.

The expert testimony has been technical, and the findings, while important, will be interesting and subject to revision or rejection by the next President, who will make his own decisions as to what machinery he will use and his selections to help him run it.

President Eisenhower is working on his own recommendations for his successor. At his latest press conference, he said he would defer making them public until next January, just before he leaves office. He had planned to give them to the present session of Congress. He said he had decided on postponement because of his conviction that anything he proposed would probably be made political in some form or another.

THE LIMITATION to "machinery" will not prevent the subcommittee from taking testimony about the downing of the U-2 and the breaking up of the Paris conference. Jackson plans to call Secretary of State Christian A. Herter and Defense Secretary Thomas S. Gates Jr. to determine whether there was proper co-ordination of the two departments and the Central Intelligence Agency in the decision-making procedures before the conference.

While Jackson feels the subcommittee is barred from criticizing individuals in the present national security setup, he hopes the subcommittee will be able to make affirmative recommendations regarding personnel which, in effect, will expose the faults in the staffing of organization during the Eisenhower Administration.

He told the Post-Dispatch these recommendations would probably include repeal of the laws and departmental regulations which limit to three and four years the assignment to Washington of defense officers and state career diplomats. Such action would permit the building of a permanent NSC staff of foreign service and military officers with prestige and pay comparable to that of ambassadors and generals.

Jackson, who would be receptive to the Democratic vice-presidential nomination, disclosed this week to a conference of the National Defense Executive Reserve, a group of government officials and business men, some of the faults of the national security machinery as it has been used by President Eisenhower. He also indicated some of the recommendations the subcommittee will make to the new Congress and the new President.

THE WHITE HOUSE machinery is centered around the policy advisory functions of the National Security Council, of which the President is chairman, and its two main subsidiaries, the Planning Staff and the Operations Co-ordinating Board. Each subsidiary has a hundred or so small working committees to feed information to the Planning Staff and to implement the directives suggested by the Council and approved by the President. These committees reach down into the various departments and agencies that have anything to do with defense and foreign policies. Their use has been sharply criticized by many witnesses before the subcommittee.

Because of the limitation against inquiring into the work of present personnel in the NSC organization, Jackson criticized by implication what he called the "mobilizing of our human resources to meet the demands of the cold war."

His major thesis was that the contest with Soviet Russia and its satellites may drag on for decades without reaching the hot war stage, and that the Communist offensive will be pressed on all fronts—economic, military, political and psychological—in all parts of the world.

"If successful," he said, "loss of the cold war could be as final and fatal as defeat in an all-out war."

Observing that the American task transcends either political party or any particular administration, he asserted:

"We need and must have the best scientists, the best engineers, the best lawyers, the best diplomats, the best planners and the best administrators this country has to offer. Above all, we need the fine leadership—at the Cabinet and sub-Cabinet levels throughout government—which can produce the decisions made, and actions taken by this small group of men at the heart of the governmental process, the success of our national security policies and thus our survival."

...with the complex economic, military and political factors. They must be able to go to the core of a problem, reach decisions and provide aggressive leadership. This calls for the best brains, the finest talent we can muster. Unless we can dedicate leadership of this caliber to government service, we cannot expect to succeed in the drawn out contest with the Sino-Soviet bloc."

Jackson quoted from unpublished subcommittee testimony that since the start of the Eisenhower Administration, 23 men, serving on the average of less than two and a half years, had held eight key national security posts. Another study disclosed that, of the several hundred business men who had served in government, 48 per cent stayed a year or less and only 33 per cent served more than two years.

He commented: "There is increasing evidence that it takes from one to two years for an able man, without prior relevant experience, to pay dividends to the Government in a new job. This is especially true in the national security field where the complexities of decision-making have progressed geometrically in recent years."

HAD THE SENATOR been willing to name names, he could have pointed out that President Eisenhower has changed his special assistant for national security affairs four times. This important official directs the work of the NSC organization. The incumbent is Gordon Gray, who is also chairman of the Planning Staff and the Operations Co-ordinating Board. He succeeded Robert Cutler, Boston investment banker, who had been Mr. Eisenhower's original appointment for the position. Cutler's service was interrupted for about a year by Dillon Anderson, a Houston (Tex.) lawyer. During the Truman administration, the post was held by Sidney Souers of St. Louis.

Jackson could also have noted that the Foreign Aid Agency, which has expended between three and four billion dollars annually and is an important factor in foreign and defense policy, has had four directors—Harold E. Stassen, John B. Hol-

THE CHAIRMAN summarized these improvements indicated by the subcommittee's testimony:

1. Much of our recruiting machinery has been on a haphazard basis. Nowhere in government do we have a central office to assist the departments and agencies in finding the right man for the right job.

2. Many men appointed to high office in the national security field have little acquaintance with the intricate problems they are called on to resolve. John Carson, a member of the Gaither Committee, testified: "Few presidential appointees bring to these jobs, in addition to substantial personal talents, real experience in the complex problems this country faces in the field of national security and a knowledge of what it takes to operate effectively in government."

3. The Government has been plagued with high rates of turnover in key posts. Chairman Roger Jones of the Civil Service Commission testified that the turn-over had reached an "extremely dangerous point."

4. The so-called conflict of interest laws—passed many years ago to bar dual allegiance to governmental and private interests—are out of step with the economic realities of the twentieth century. They also run counter to the Government's needs for talent.

Jackson gave this personal opinion: "The truth is we cannot expect men to give up stock opinions, pension plans and other benefits to accept federal posts. These personal-security-oriented arrangements now provide for the long-range economic planning of millions of Americans."

5. The so-called dual-compensation laws constitute another case where ancient statutes hamstring our search for special skills and experience. For example, an able military officer, highly trained at government expense over 20 years, has technical knowledge and ample administrative, diplomatic and general leadership experience. Under our present system, he retires in his late forties or early fifties. There are many posts throughout government where he could make constructive contributions but the dual-compensation law says he cannot take both his pension—which he has already earned—and a government salary. If the combined amount exceeds \$10,000, so he takes his skills and experience to work for the same industries and research firms whose services the Government eagerly seeks.

6. Men in their late thirties and forties, with the imagination and drive the Government needs, are often unwilling to trade their pay checks, fringe benefits and prospects for a vice-presidency of a partnership for the insecurity and inadequate compensation of government service. With this group, as with others, we have failed to convince them of the genuine needs for their talents and the demands of the cold war.

JACKSON SUGGESTED these changes to the legislative and executive branches: Reform or repeal the archaic conflict of interest and dual-compensation laws; act together to establish an orderly procedure to catalog and utilize human resources; deal honestly and realistically with the problem of low government salaries.

To Congress he gave this advice: "Serve notice that it will be reluctant to confirm inexperienced appointees who do not indicate a desire to remain in office long enough to give the kind of service the country has a right to expect."

To the White House, he said that "the executive branch must provide strong and dynamic leadership which will, in itself, help to attract men of talent" and that "it must create a clear public understanding of the awesome nature of this contest we have not sought but which we cannot afford to lose."

Neither the present Congress nor the Executive is expected to act on these suggestions in the remaining months of the Eisenhower Administration. With the cold war continuing indefinitely, the subcommittee's final recommendation and Mr. Eisenhower's farewell message for improving the national security machinery and personnel will be high on the agenda of the new Congress and the new President.

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